

Resilience After Terrorism

This year, the United States commemorates the tenth anniversary of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks that killed nearly 3000 people in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania. People in the United States and around the world have shown resilience and courage in the face of terrorism. Here are some of their stories.



ALVARO ARAGON/ COURTESY OF MAITE PAGAZAURTUNDÚA RUIZ

Activist Maite Pagazaurtundúa

Democracy, an Antidote to Terrorism

Maite Pagazaurtundúa Ruiz's brother Joxeba was killed by ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna a Basque armed separatist group that has terrorised Spain for decades. The Spanish government holds ETA responsible for killing more than 800 people and injuring thousands of others in bombings and other attacks during the past four decades.

“My name is Maite Pagazaurtundúa. I'm 46 years old. I have a degree in Basque and Spanish from the University of Deusto. I was born, grew up and studied in the Basque Country, a wealthy area of Europe where a fanatical form of nationalist, Marxist-Leninist identity is deeply rooted. Eleven years ago, I was given police protection after several of my friends were murdered. Their murders were motivated by the ideological hatred of the ETA terrorist organization toward those of us who do not share their beliefs. My brother, Joxeba, was murdered eight years ago, in 2003. He had known ETA wanted to kill him since late 1994.

At the end of 1998, I promoted, together with other citizens, a platform for democratic activism called “Basta Ya,” which received the European Parliament's Sakharov

Prize for Freedom of Thought in 2000. I have been the president of the Spanish Victims of Terrorism Foundation since 2005. We provide direct assistance to the victims of terrorism and raise public awareness of democratic values and the delegitimization of murderous ideologies. We also work in favor of the memory and dignity of the victims of terrorism. Democratic conscience is the foundation of my work and my way of facing those who want to take away my freedom.”

Entrepreneurship Gives Displaced Colombians New Lives

Colombia's citizens have been beset by violence from paramilitary rebel groups such as Farc (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), ELN (National Liberation Army) and AUC (United Self Defense Forces of Colombia) since the 1960s. More recently “bacrim,” or armed drug gangs terrorize Colombians. Nina Rodríguez tells how her village was attacked and dispersed by such an armed group.

“I'm Nina Rodríguez, a 48-year-old single mother of three and a grandmother, who has lived the same tragedy of many families displaced from their homes by illegal



COURTESY OF FUPAD CAUCA

Nina Rodríguez, right, packing coffee in the Alimenticios Moralia plant in Tunia, Cauca, Colombia.

armed groups in Colombia. I was a teacher in the village of El Rosario in Cauca. I still shiver when I think about the group of armed men who killed several people in front of a bus, just to show that they could. Together with 36 other families, I managed to escape, bringing nothing with me but memories. Over the next five years, I moved 23 times from place to place.

But I never stopped hoping, and one day an opportunity opened up to me. I found out about a USAID mentoring program that was serving about 13,000 displaced and vulnerable families in the region. The program provided training in agricultural production and business development, as well as the necessary equipment to start a business. Through the program, I received machinery for roasting, grinding and packing coffee, and started a business with several other women. We processed the coffee grown by other farmers who belonged to their own association. Later, we started a second project: diversifying their production to produce an organic drink with coffee and guandules — a bean native to Colombia. We called the product Cafedul. Thanks to this creative initiative, Agroinnova, a private business incubator in the Colombian state of Cauca, is planning to offer Cafedul produced by us for commercial sale. ”

An Amputee's Response to Terrorism

Jabaty Mambu was a 15-year-old high school student on January 6, 1999, when surrounded his family's house in Freetown, Sierra Leone, and threatened to burn it down. Others escaped, but Jabaty and three friends did not. They were lined up with other youths from the neighborhood, one of whom was shot dead before Jabaty's eyes. The rebels pinned Jabaty to the ground, cut off his right arm below the elbow, and left him for dead. He was taken to a local hospital where he recovered for six weeks, then moved to a displaced person's camp and in early 2000 to a Médecins Sans Frontières amputee camp. Sierra Leone's civil war ended in 2002. Jabaty is now 28.

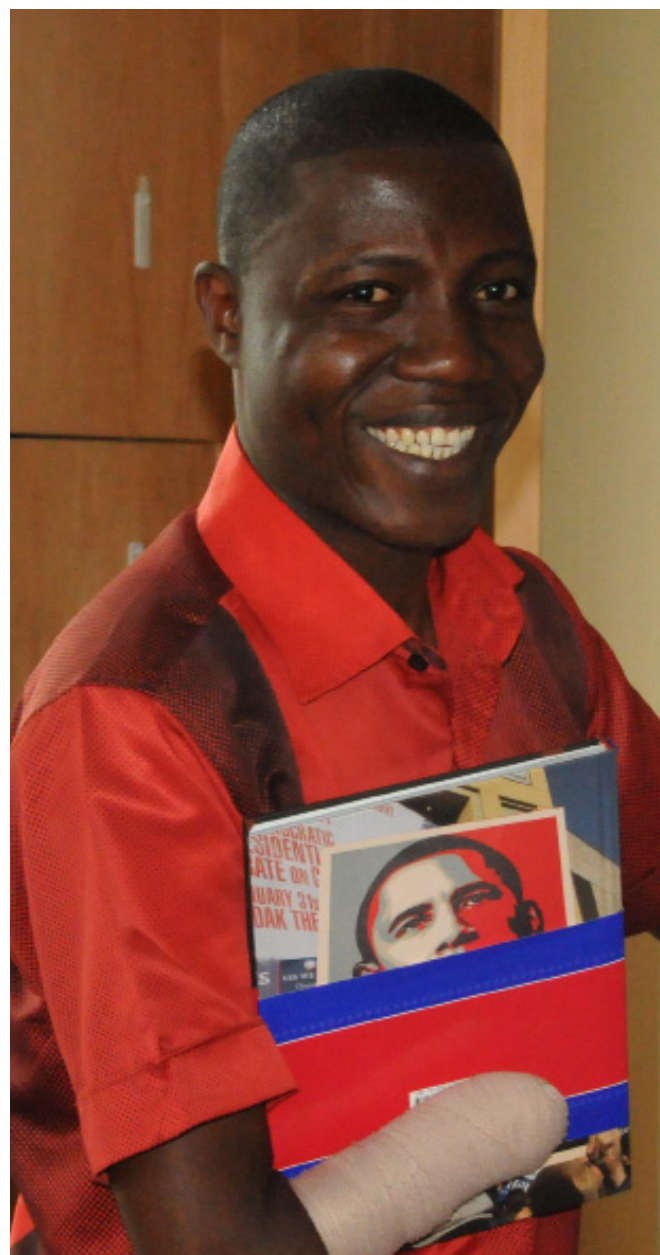
“After all that happened, I and many of the youths at the camp were discouraged and didn't even want to go out in the street. But I felt that the only way to overcome the trauma was to go register again at a school. Some of the journalists who visited the camp gave us money to use for our education. So one of the camp staff took me to Albert Academy and talked to the principal. He looked at me and said, 'Okay, come and take the test to be admitted.' I succeeded in passing the test and began to attend school again.

I had to walk very far, from Aberdeen to Circular Road, for classes each day. I was the only amputee at the school, but I wanted to be included in all activities. So I participated in running, football — all the sports. And I became known in that school and the principal and other pupils came to respect me. I graduated in 2003, but I remained active in sports. I am now president of the Sierra Leone Amputee Sports Club, which was established in 2001 mainly by friends of the amputees. With the idea that sporting activities can play a vital role in the recovery of marginalized groups, our organization established a

football team just for amputees. In 2005, some friends from the United Kingdom paid for five of us to take a certificate course in computer literacy. These broader activities make the Club able to help amputees with the basic skills of life.

I am an advocate for war victims, and I like to engage with the public. In 2005 the Special Court for Sierra Leone asked me to be the liaison between the Court and 231 amputees in the camp. I talked to community groups and schools to explain the concerns of the amputees. Between 2006 and 2009, I traveled to the Hague several times to take part in the trial of Charles Taylor. Including amputees in the justice system was a vital step in reconciliation.

Still mindful of things that I can do, I always like adventure. If they said, 'Jabaty, go to space,' then I would go! ”



U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT

Disability activist Jabaty Mambu after being presented with a book by Ambassador Michael Owen